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*An APOLOGY for the Annual Collec-  
tions made towards the Support of Clergy-  
mens Widows and Orphans, within the  
Counties of Durham and Northumberland.*

BEING A  
S E R M O N  
PREACHED AT THE  
YEARLY MEETING  
OF THE  
S O N S of the C L E R G Y

AT  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE,  
At St. NICHOLAS's Church,  
On Thursday the 23d of October 1746.

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By THO. SHARP, D. D. Archdeacon of  
*Northumberland*, and Prebendary of *Durham*.

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M.DCC.XLVI.





A N  
A P O L O G Y, &c.

2 KINGS, Chap. iv. Ver. 1. 2.

*Now there cried a certain Woman of the Wives of the Sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy Servant my Husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord: And the Creditor is come to take unto him my two Sons to be Bondmen.*

*And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the House? And she said, Thine Handmaid hath not any thing in the House, save a Pot of Oil.*

**T**H E Points in this Passage to which I would bespeak your Attention, are these following.

*First, A WIDOW with Children in Distress; poor and in Debt: her whole Substance being a Pot of Oil, and the Creditor coming upon her to make his Seizure.*

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*Secondly,*



Secondly, A WIDOW distinguished by a peculiar Character, being a *Woman of the Wives of the Sons of the Prophets*; and as such she makes her Address for Pity and Relief. She declares her Relation to the *Prophets* at the same Time that she declares her Widowhood; *Thy Servant my Husband is dead*: And she pleads his Piety when she discovers her own Necessities. She lays his Merits and her own Afflictions together, to set off the latter with more Force and Tenderness----*Thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord: And the Creditor is come*--- This is naturally and beautifully urged; and she lays her Stress upon it. Her Husband, it seems, had been a Worshipper and Servant of the true God in Times of great Idolatry and Defection of the *Israelites* to *Baal*: And this, it is not unlikely, was the Reason of his Poverty, being a good Man, discountenanced and oppressed in an evil Age. *Thou knowest, &c.* (says she to *Elisha*) viz. Thou wast a Witness of my Husband's Worth and Character: Bear Witness now to the extream Hardship of my Case. No sooner is he dead and gone, but *the Creditor is come*; is come to take unto him my two Sons to be Bondmen, without Hope of Redemption; for their Father is no more, and their Mother is in Want.

Thirdly, HER Complaint is to a *Prophet*; to *Elisha*, the *Master of the Prophets*: One who, as she might reasonably presume, would be



be the more sensibly touched with her Case, in consideration of the Relation she bore to the Sacred College; and whose Charity was likely to flow the more freely in her Favour, upon Remembrance of her late Husband's Piety and Zeal in the Service of God. which she makes her principal Plea, and which is in her Mouth as a thousand Arguments.

THE *fourth* and *last* Thing to be remarked, is the compassionate Regard of *Elisba* towards this humble Supplicant: *What shall I do for thee?* And his particular Enquiry into her Circumstances, that he might proportion his Succours to her Wants: *Tell me, what hast thou in the House?* He treats her as a Sister, or a Daughter, as one that he was bound to befriend, as one that was justly intitled to what Assistance he could make her, both in regard of her Circumstances, deplorable in themselves, and on account of her Claims, thro' Affinity, upon the whole Prophetic Order.

AND now, whosoever doth not perceive, from these short Observations that I have made, some Relation, Resemblance of Character, or circumstantial Likeness between the Persons concern'd in my Text, and those who are concern'd in the Business of this Day, *viz.* The Petitioners for the present Charity, and the Dispensers of it: I say, whosoever is not sensible, from the few Remarks already made, what Room here is for an Application of this Scripture to the present Occasion of our Meeting,

ing, would hardly be made sensible by any further Enlargement upon the Particulars.

BUT in Truth, it is only trifling with a Text of Scripture, nay worse, it is misusing it, to labour to extend it further than its proper Latitude. This is only an historical Passage that hath no Reference to the Subject I am called up to speak to, otherwise than by Accommodation thro' Similitude of Circumstances; being a Description of a Case nearly parallel to the Case in Hand. It is an Image borrowed from Antiquity, that doth aptly enough represent (in all the main Strokes and strongest Lines of it) the Quality of our Petitioners, and the Nature and Reasonableness of their Petition to us this Day. And, if it appear justly and properly introduced on this Occasion, (as I conceive it is) if *the Widow and her Sons*, which are spoke of in the Text, have plainly *their Correspondents* among the Objects of this Charity, and if the Sum and Substance of both their Stories and Complaints be nearly one and the same; then (waving all other Points of Resemblance in the two Cases, which cannot be adjusted with equal Propriety) my whole Design in producing this Scripture is answer'd. And as there are no practical Duties arising from it to be enforced, nor any Doctrine to be explained, I shall therefore adapt the Remainder of this Discourse to the particular Occasion of our assembling here.

IT is natural for People to ask in the first Place,

Place, How there comes to be any Occasion for Meetings of this Kind on the Behalf of the Widows and Orphans of Clergymen, since we do not find any such publick annual Collections set on Foot for the Families of those who have followed other Professions or Trades; nor indeed do we know that there is any Institution of this Sort even for Clergymens Relicts in any other Kingdom, where there is an Establish'd Church, but in this of ours?

ALAS! my Brethern, the Reasons to be assign'd for this are not of grateful Remembrance, and to set them forth in a full Remonstrance, and in so publick a Manner, may perhaps prove a little unwelcome; yet, as they are such as will not only justify but recommend this Method of Charity, I shall briefly deliver them, with as much Decency, and with as little Offence, as I can. I am sure they are such as neither we who are Clergymen ourselves, or Descendants from the Clergy, need be asham'd to own: But rather such as make it incumbent upon us (and, I think, not unbecoming us) to call upon other well-disposed Persons to join Hands with us in carrying on this annual Benevolence.

THE first Occasion that was given for entering into a Scheme of publick Charity for the Relief of the Families of deceased Clergymen, was a very extraordinary one, the like to which we hope in God will never be given again: And that was, the Wants and Miseries  
of



of those poor Widows and Orphans whose Husbands and Fathers had been ejected for their Loyalty to the King, and Fidelity to the Church of *England* in the Time of the *Great Rebellion*.

How universal a Calamity and Desolation did then overspread the Households of the Established Episcopal Ministers; how numerous the unfortunate Families that were then turned adrift, and remain'd destitute of all other Means of Subsistence than what is common to Vagrants and Aliens, will easily be acknowledged by as many as know the History of those Times, or have examin'd the Accounts of the Numbers of the sequester'd loyal Clergy; which, at a moderate Computation, amounted to seven or eight Thousand. Of these indeed several were restored to their Benefices afterwards, (all possible Care being taken to replace them upon the King's Return) and great Numbers of them were also unmarried. But yet it is very easy to guess, out of such a Multitude of Sufferers, how many poor Families were left by the married Clergy, who either died before the Restoration of the King, or were never themselves replaced in their Preferments; or if they were, yet had contracted such Debts during their Ejection, as prevented their making any Provision for their poor Families.

AND it was for the Relief of these that  
the

the Sons of the \* Clergy were first incorporated by a Royal Charter into a Body Politick, to receive and to dispense the Benefactions bestowed or bequeathed to such charitable Use: And not only so, but to establish and support a perpetual Fund for the Relief of poor Clergymens Widows, who should hereafter, by any other Cause, or Family-Misfortune, become proper Objects of a publick Charity.

If then it should be asked, What has this Account of the sequester'd Ministers Widows to do with our present Subject? I answer,

*First*, THAT it shews the Origin and Foundation of this Charity, as a publick Institution,

\* In the Abstract of the Charter granted by his Majesty King *Charles II.* for erecting this Corporation in 1678, it is said, That " his Majesty having taken Notice, that divers  
 " charitable Persons had appeared very forward in contributing to the Relief of such of the Widows and Children  
 " of *Loyal and Orthodox Clergymen* as were poor, and the good Effect the same had; and taking into his Princely  
 " Consideration the *great Sufferings of many of the Clergy in England for their Loyalty*, was graciously pleased, by  
 " his *Charter* under the Great Seal of *England*, to ordain, constitute, and grant, That the Persons therein named, and their Successors, (to be elected as is therein expressed)  
 " BE ONE BODY POLITICK AND CORPORATE, BY THE NAME OF THE GOVERNORS OF THE CHARITY FOR THE RELIEF OF THE POOR WIDOWS AND CHILDREN OF CLERGYMEN; and that, by the same Name, they should have perpetual Succession, and be capable to purchase, have, or take Manors, Lands, and Hereditaments, &c. not exceeding the yearly Value of 2000*l.* and all manner of Goods and Chattels, and to dispose thereof; and by that Name to plead and to be impleaded in all Actions, &c.  
 " And to act all other Matters and Things, as fully as any other Body Politick in this Realm can do."

stitution, to have been honourable, and in no ways reproachful to us ; inasmuch as it was for the Credit and Renown of the *English* Clergy, that they so unanimously and so resolutely suffer'd the Forfeiture of their whole Livelihood and Subsistence for the Cause of Monarchy and Episcopacy in Times of such Oppression, Irreligion, and Anarchy.

AND, *secondly*, I have mention'd the Occasion of the Establishment of the Corporation of Clergymens Sons, to shew how happy it hath been in its Consequences : For it hath open'd a Way for the Discovery (and in some Measure for the Relief too) of such manifold Necessities in the Households of deceas'd Clergymen, as probably could never have been known so evidently by any other Means.

WHOSOEVER casts his Eyes upon the Lists of Pensionary-Widows which are annually publish'd by the Governors of the Corporation, will find, that the Widows of the sequester'd Clergy have, since the Revolution, made a very small Part of the miserable Catalogue ; and I presume by this Time all of them who had receiv'd Assistance from that Fund are extinct : For it is now near thirty Years since I remember but *one* of them standing at the Head of the Roll \*, with a distinguish'd Pension,

\* The Year here referr'd to was 1719. And the four first Articles of the Distribution made in that Year are as follow, according to the printed Abstract, viz.

To one sequester'd Minister's Widow	—	—	£.
			6
			To



Pension, as a Monument or Record of the great Calamities consequent upon the Sequestrations, and of the original Foundation of that Society and Charity. And all the Places of these sequester'd Clergymens Widows are now fill'd up with the Relicts of such as held Preferments since the Restoration, of whom about † Six Hundred do yearly receive small Pensions §: And there are some Hundreds more who would be very glad of the like small Assistance, if the Fund were large enough to admit of their Enrollment among their suffering Sisters \*\*. But so disproportionate as yet

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is

To nine Widows, at 3 l. each	—	—	£. 27
To Three, at 4 l. each	—	—	12
To Five hundred more, at 3 l. 10 s. each	—	—	1750
cc. cc. cc.			

† Abstract of the Distributions 1719.

To Five hundred and Sixty-six poor Widows and Children relieved this Year — — — 2058 l.

N. B. Besides the Pensions above there is annually paid to several Persons for appropriated Annuities, pursuant to the Donation of the Benefactors — — — 137 l. 10 s.

§ Abstract in 1719. — Distributed within the last twenty Years, among poor Widows and Children of Clergymen, several Thousand Pounds: (besides what has been collected at the Annual Feast, which, according to Custom, hath been generally paid by the Stewards for putting out Clergymens Children Apprentices) But the Number of Widows and Children who do partake of the same is so great, that each Person's Share is very inconsiderable. And the largest Pension allowed to each Widow seldom exceeding *Three Pounds and Ten Shillings*, unless where the Charity is otherwise particularly directed by the Donor.

\*\* *Ibid.* This Charity being now publickly known, more poor Widows and Children do daily, *in great Numbers*, apply themselves for Relief; to whose Wants this Corporation is not yet enabled to make any proportionable Supply.

is the Revenue, tho' a very great one \*, to the Wants of the Clergymens Relicts, that the Governors were obliged, about ten Years since, to reject or postpone all the Petitions of the new Claimants upon them, till they had supplied the Deficiencies of their Stock, occasion'd by too large an Admittance of Pensioners in the former Years.

So that you see this Fountain of publick Munificence, being once open'd, and flowing for some Years, hath proved at length like *the Pool and Cloyster of Bethesda*, the gathering together of *the Impotent*; all striving to get into the *Pool*, to be cured of their several Grievances. And happy they who step in first; while others, after several vain Attempts and Disappointments, lie waiting for some friendly Hand to put them in, or to give them a Relief that is equivalent.

AND it was the Insufficiency of the Fund  
above,

\* The Revenues of the Corporation (in less than forty Years from its Erection by King *Charles II.*) being increased to near Two thousand Pounds *per Ann.* by the charitable Benefactions of several well-disposed Persons, and the Corporation having represented the same by their humble Petition to his late most gracious Majesty King *George*; his Majesty was pleased to grant his Royal Licence, dated the 16th Day of *December*, in the first Year of his Reign, to enable the Corporation to make further Purchases and Acquisitions, not exceeding Five thousand Pounds *per Ann. ibid.*

And if the Corporation's Revenues have increased within these last thirty Years, (*i. e.* since the Grant of the *above* said Licence) in proportion to their Increase in the former Years, or in proportion to the very great Increase of the Collections at the Annual Feast for twenty Years last past, they must needs be at this Time very considerable.

above, to supply the large Demands occasion'd by such a Multitude of proper Objects of this Charity, that gave Rise to the *Annual Meetings of the Sons of the Clergy within this Diocese* \*.

OUR disabled Widows and Orphans lay at the farthest Distance from the Fountain of Relief; and the greatest Part of them, like the *impotent Cripple at Bethesda, had no Man to put them into the Pool*. Whereupon some good Angel at length came, and *stirr'd the Waters*

\* It is now near Forty Years since this Charity was first set on Foot here in the North. The earliest Meeting of the Sons of the Clergy at *Newcastle* being held on *September 5, 1709*: And tho' it was at first rather a private Appointment between some Gentlemen who were Friends and Well-wishers to a publick Scheme of this Nature; yet, as some small Contributions were made and distributed by them, and an Account thereof kept, the Society, since formed on this slender and seemingly weak Foundation, dates its Beginning from thence.

Especially as it happen'd, that a like Attempt was made in the very same Year in *Northumberland*; designed chiefly for the Benefit of the two most Northern Deanries of *Alnwick* and *Bambrough*, on *September 14, 1709*, and upon as narrow a Bottom as the other.

The Society at *Newcastle* meeting with publick Encouragement, and with the Countenance of *the Corporation there*, (to which they own themselves much indebted for the early Progress made in their Design, as well as for other Favours) and receiving kind and seasonable Assistance from several Gentlemen in the Counties of *Durham* and *Northumberland*, (to whom they hold themselves greatly obliged for their Benevolence) became in a few Years considerable enough to send Relief to poor Objects in most Parts of *the Diocese of Durham*, as well as in the peculiar Jurisdiction of *Hexham*; which, being within the County of *Northumberland*, tho' not in this Diocese, came also within their Care and Concern.

The



*Waters* in this Place. Another healing Spring to refresh their Bowels was open'd for them here, which hitherto hath flow'd with the desired Success; and we hope it shall still continue to afford them yearly Relief and Succour: Which, tho' not proportionate indeed either to their Wants or to their Numbers \*, is however equal to what could have been afforded

The Society in the North continued in the mean Time to hold Annual Meetings at *Alnwick* and *Wooler* alternately, for the Benefit of those two Deanries, where the said Towns are respectively situated, with as good Success as could be well expected, tho' not equal to that which the same Undertaking at *Newcastle*, for the obvious Reasons above given, met with. Their Collections however still increased, and afforded an acceptable Provision, tho' a small one, for the poor Widows and Orphans within that Neighbourhood.

But in the Year 1725 the two Societies united, and the Collection made annually at *Alnwick* (and there only since the Coalition) in *June*, has from thenceforward been thrown into the Collection made afterward at the Annual Feast at *Newcastle*. Whereby the Widows and Orphans in the most Northern Parts, being recommended by the *Alnwick* Society, share in the Advantages of a larger Collection; which is distributed, without Reserve or Partiality, among the most proper Objects in every Part of the two Counties.

Some of the Members of each Society, who were among the first Undertakers in *this Charity*, are yet living, and have the Pleasure to see from what very small and unpromising Beginnings it hath grown, under their Hands, to an unexpected Degree of publick Utility: And especially that Part of it, which, being planted in a richer Soil, and cultivated with greater Advantages, hath, within a small Compass of Time, spread its Branches from *Tees* to *Tweed*, and shed its Fruits in every Quarter of the interjacent Country.

\* The Number of Widows, and Descendants of poor Clergymen, (belonging to these Counties, now upon the Society's Books) is *Eighty four*, (most of them Widows, and many of them having several Children, which are not reckon'd into the Number above-mention'd) to whom small Pensions are allotted, according to the Increase or Decrease

forded them from above, from a much greater Treasure, and a much more able Society.

I NEED add no more concerning the Occasion or the Usefulness and Benefit of these Combinations form'd by the Sons of the Clergy for the better Support of the numerous poor Objects above-mention'd. It may be proper to speak to another Question, which, I am sensible, it is natural for People to ask in the second Place; and that is,

How comes it to pass, that in a peaceful, and, as we commonly say, flourishing State of the Church, there should be found so many Objects of Charity in the Families of Clergymen, and such

Decrease of the yearly Collections: Due Regard nevertheless being always had to the Quality, Behaviour, Age, Infirmities, and other Circumstances of the Objects, in proportioning the several Allotments agreeably thereto; so far at least as the Society either have, from their own Knowledge, or can discover by Means of Certificates, and other Informations, sufficient Reasons for making such Distinction in the Distributions. By which Means, tho' there are some Pensions granted of four or five Pounds each, (*i. e.* where the greatest Necessities demand the greatest Relief) yet above Two Thirds of the whole Number of the Pensions do not arise higher than three Pounds each; and of these again the better Half do not exceed forty Shillings, of which still there are some even below that Value.

This Computation is taken from the Distribution in the present Year 1746; and the Proportions in the former Years will be found to hold, if not exactly, yet nearly *the same*. As may more fully appear, by having Recourse to the Societies Accounts of all their Collections and Disbursements, which have been kept with great Exactness from the first Rise of the Undertaking, both at *Newcastle*, and in the Northern Deanries; separately, while the *Two Societies* remain'd independent and without Correspondence, but jointly since their Union.

such deplorable Instances of Want and Distress among their Relicts?

THE Fact we must allow, whatever be the Reason of it: And I beg Leave to observe upon it, before we go any further, that it is a very discouraging Consideration to all such as devote their Labours and their Lives to the Work of the Ministry; and more especially to all such as join Affinity with them with Resolution to run the same Fortunes: It is discouraging, I say, forasmuch as it doth not generally appear that it is owing to the prevailing Negligence, or Idleness, or Extravagance of the Clergy, that so many weeping desolate Families are left behind them. Were this indeed the Case, that the Poverty of their Households was the natural Consequence of their Sloth or Prodigality, (tho' this ought not to have abated our Compassion for their poor Families, yet) we should have had little to say on this Head, and should have been glad to have waved the present Enquiry. But there are other Reasons, and irreproachable ones too, to be given of this Matter.

THE first is, The Meanness of several parochial Endowments, and the very scanty Provision that falls to the Lot of so many of the Clergy under the present Establishment.

FAR am I from intending here any Impeachment of our Constitution, or any Reflection on our Laws. Far from designing to revive any Disputes about the Legality of Rights,



Rights, which were formerly held to be of a spiritual Nature, but are now passed from the Clergy into other Hands. I would only represent a Matter of Fact: I hope it may be said without any bad Construction, since it may be said with Truth, that, in the present State of poor Benefices with Cure, there are many of the Incumbents who are quite disabled (because they have not wherewithal) from making any Provision for their Families; but must leave them when they die ---- such as we find them.

IN the Survey of the poor Cures throughout *England* and *Wales*, which was taken about forty \* Years ago, in order to the discharging them of First-fruits and Tenths, the Number of Benefices with Cure, not exceeding the yearly Value of ten Pounds, was so great † as might astonish any Person who is a Stranger to these Matters. And of these again

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\* It was in 1707, when the whole Number of Livings discharged from First-fruits and Tenths were computed to be 3885, and of these 1543 were Rectories. But great Numbers have been certified since that Time into the Exchequer, and many do yet remain uncertified.

† They who speak in round Numbers tell us of 2000 in *England* and *Wales*; which may come near the Truth, since in the four Northern Dioceses, which contain scarce a seventh Part of them, the Calculation stands thus, as made from *Etton's Lib. Val. Edit. 1742.*

Of Benefices, Chapels, Donatives and Curacies, within the Province of York, already certified as not exceeding the clear yearly Value of 10 *l.* there are

And of these not exceeding 5 <i>l.</i>	—	—	292
And of these not exceeding 4 <i>l.</i>	—	—	104
	—	—	76

Of

there are some so far beneath that inconsiderable Value just now mentioned, that the *certain Income* of them will scarce amount to the Hire or Wages of a common Footman.

It is acknowledged indeed, that, as these Cures singly are by no Means a Subsistence, therefore Clergymen are indulged in holding two or more of them together. But what doth such necessary Indulgence after all amount to? Why nothing more than this, that the poor Man, heavy laden with his double Cures, his Plurality of Livings, takes a great deal

Of these again not exceeding 3 l. — — — 54

Of these again not exceeding 2 l. — — — 33

And some of these again even lower still.

It is very true, that, since these Valuations were taken, the Case of these poor Cures is something altered for the better; and will in Time be more so, by the *Augmentations* made by *Queen Anne's Bounty*, partly by *Benefaction*, and partly by *Lor.* But as this makes nothing against our assigning, on this Occasion, the Meanness of these old Stipends as one Reason of the Poverty of Clergymen, since the Objects on our present List are mostly, if not all, the Relicts of those who lived not to enjoy any Benefit of these *Augmentations* from the *Bounty*; so neither doth it make much for mending our Prospect of having fewer poor Widows and Orphans to take care of, at least for some Years yet to come: if what be said in *the Preface* to the aforementioned Edition of *Ecclon* be true, (and the Author of it seems to understand what he writes upon) *viz.* That "it will be the Work of Ages before ALL the small Livings, intitled to an Augmentation, can receive any Benefit or Share therefrom; and of many Ages more before the Income of every Living will be so advanced as to afford a *Competency* for the Minister." — Which he thus explains in a subsequent Note, *viz.* — "It will be 500 Years before all the Livings now under 50 l. *per Ann.* will be raised to 60 l. *per Ann.* supposing every Year there be the same Money distributed as has been for three or four Years last past."

deal of Pains to get a very sorry Livelihood. And what if he be a further Pluralist under the Dispensation of Marriage, and hath a domestic Flock to take care of along with his parochial? If we suppose his little Revenues may suffice for the present Subsistence of himself and his Dependants, is it not all we can suppose? Are there any Hopes of his doing more, or of his leaving them, when he drops, otherwise than to the Care of the Sons of the Clergy, and to the Charity of good People who assist them in this friendly Work?

INDEED the great Comfort under this Reflection is, that, notwithstanding the Scantiness of so many parochial Provisions, the Altars of God are not deserted, nor his Service neglected; but Men have been always found, (and tho' not *all* of them such as could be wished, yet *several* of them Men of Parts, and of Worth, and good Degree of Learning) who, with great Labour and with great Patience, have gone thro' the Work of the Ministry under such Discouragements. Which occasion'd the Observation of a great Man, and I take it to be a just one, *viz.* "That we can shew in this Church of *England* more Labourers, *worthy of Hire*, "who preach the Gospel *without Gold or Silver in their Purse, or Scrip for their Journey*, than in any other Church in the Christian World." And I beg Leave to add to this Observation, with regard to those of them who are now dead and gone, that their almost



perishing Households seem to be an Evidence in their Behalf, that *they fed not the Flock of Christ by Constraint, but willingly; not for filthy Lucre, but of a ready Mind.* For they might have shifted better in many Ways of Business with regard to this World's Goods, had they either quitted the Exercise, or departed from the Rules of their Function. And that Poverty, methinks, which thus intitles them to our Praise, should more especially recommend their poor Relicts to our Charity; that, as they themselves reaped so little Fruits from their Labours when living, their surviving Dependants may reap a little more of them in Reversion.

BUT to leave the Case of the smallest Benefices, and the unenvied Pluralists, let us advance a little higher.

IT is evident, that some Families are left very destitute, even by those who were not thought, when alive, to be straitned in their Revenues; nay, possibly, who were thought by some of their Neighbours to have more than they needed. What Reason now can be assigned for this? Why truly, if all Matters be fairly laid together, I am apt to think it will appear to any unprejudiced Person, that the most a Clergyman can do, even in such Circumstances as are usually reputed easy and comfortable, is to maintain a Decency suitable to his Character and the common Expectations of Men, and to educate his Children (especially if he have many

many of them) in such a Manner as that they may be able, by their Industry and a *little Portion*, to live above Want and Contempt when their Parents are dead.

BUT then if the good Man himself happens to be wanting in worldly Prudence, to be unskill'd in the Arts of OEconomy and frugal Management, which sometimes is, or easily may be supposed to be, the Case of a worthy Clergyman, considering that neither the Education, nor the Studies proper to his Calling, lead towards secular Wisdom: I say, if this happens to be his Case, and he hath none in his Family whose Head is better turn'd to these Matters than his own, no Marvel if his Relicts be expos'd at his Decease to a Way of Life in no ways suitable to what they had been us'd to; if not, moreover, to a Want that demands our Compassion and Relief.

AND we shall be the less surpris'd at this, if we further reflect upon some Difficulties which Clergymen lie under in improving their Incomes, which Men of other Callings and Business do not.

I SHALL just mention a few of them which are the most obvious.

As, *first*, The Revenues of the Clergy are usually known to all about them, and are often magnified above their true Value; and it is universally expected they should live up to what they have, or (to speak more truly, and which very much alters the Case) to what they  
are

are reputed to have: And if they do not, they are liable to the Imputation of being worldly-minded, and in Danger of giving Offence to weak Persons who have not so candid a Regard to their real Abilities, as a scrupulous Resentment of their not supporting that Hospitality which becomes their Function. Whereas, on the other hand, the Gains of Men who follow other Occupations of Life are pretty much unknown, so that they are at Liberty, in the Eye of the World, to live as frugally as they please: Nay, the more frugally they live, the more it advances their Credit, in the Way of Trade especially; and the more it consequently turns to their Account. No Censure attends their enriching themselves, but rather Praise. *That* worldly Wisdom, which even in Supposition hurts a Clergyman's Character, has the good Fortune in reality to establish theirs. So different are the Terms upon which Men, thus distinguish'd in their Characters, are to enjoy their own.

BUT, *secondly*, We are also to remember, that the Clergy are confined wholly to their own Calling and Employment, and are totally debarr'd from engaging in any other gainful and profitable Business: Neither will the Constitutions of the Church, nor the Statute-Laws of the Realm, nor indeed the Nature of their own Employment, (which is Business enough for them of itself) suffer them to turn their Heads and Cares to any other Affairs of Life  
that



that bring in secular Emoluments. Whereas there is no Bar to cross the Road of other Persons, or to hinder them from improving their Incomes, and raising their Fortunes, by an honest Industry, in any Way that they like best, over and above the particular Business or Trade that they were bred to.

AND as it falls not to the Turn of the Clergy to advance their Circumstances in the Ways of the World, and as it is not in their Power, (at least it is very rarely so) by the utmost Application, to make any considerable Enlargements of their Incomes, which are most commonly fixed and settled to their Hands; so it oftentimes proves a Loss to them, and a Difficulty upon them, that they are obliged not to remit or give up any of their Rights by the Establishment.

AND this, in the *third* Place, is another Thing that merits our Regard. Other Men, who do not act in Trust for Successors, are at Liberty to wave their own Rights when they please, if they chuse rather so to do than to commence expensive Contests at Law. But the Clergy *cannot* recede from the Rights of their respective Churches; I mean, they *ought not*: They cannot with a good Conscience suffer them to be invaded or taken away, if by the Laws of the Land they can support them. And you may gather by an easy Consequence from hence, what Expence, as well as Trouble, even peaceful and prudent Men

Men *may be* drawn into, by a faithful Discharge of this Trust reposed in them, in maintaining or recovering just and unalienable Rights; especially if they have the Misfortune to contest them with Persons of litigious Tempers, and more able Fortunes.

I MIGHT add to these Considerations the extraordinary Charge that attends *the Admission* to Benefices; I mean such Livings as were not discharged by the Queen's Bounty: An Expence to which, I believe, there is nothing that bears Proportion in the Admission to Civil and Military Employments. I might add, that the Revenues of the Clergy are commonly rated to *all* the publick Taxes: Whereas Men of other Business, and perhaps of the most profitable Business, are not *so assessed* for the *Gains* of their Employments. I might add some other Incumbrances *peculiar* to the Clergy, as their yearly Payments to the Crown, (for all the Livings remaining in Charge) and to their Ecclesiastical Superiors; (frequently twice in the Year, and sometimes thrice) which Things are little considered by any but those who feel the Weight of them, and who yet make no Complaint, seeing it is the Law of the Land, and there is no Remedy.

Now, I say, laying all these Points together, why should any of us make a Wonder, if Clergymen, who have nothing but their Benefices to support them, (and you will hardly suppose these Men to be *few* in Number) and  
who

who yet live in good Credit in their Neighbourhood, and are usually esteem'd by *all* to have enough, by *some* perhaps to have too much,---should happen, after all, at their Death to leave behind them ---- humble Petitioners for this Charity.

It is unreasonable to object against this, Instances of three or four Clergymen in a whole County growing rich, or buying Estates, or building up Families; for can it be expected otherwise than that *a few*, out of so great a Number, *will* make all those Advantages of good Preferments that other Men make of their secular Occupations? But if we look about, we shall find this to be so *uncommon* a Thing, especially to be done by the parochial Clergy, out of the meer Gains of their Profession, that it will rather add Strength to my former Observations than weaken them. The Clergy of *England* are computed about Twelve Thousand in Number; many of these in every Diocese are possess'd of fair Revenues, and how *few* Instances (comparatively with their Number) can be produc'd in half an Age of any Thing like a great Estate left by them to their Families, or raised out of Ecclesiastical Preferments? And yet I believe it will not be denied but that many of them are Men of such Capacities and Abilities, that if they had chanced to have been bred to other Callings, they might have made as great a Figure, and have amassed together as ample Fortunes, to have

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transmitted to their Posterity, as others commonly do in all the creditable Ways of Life.

BUT such is their Profession, that this neither *is*, nor *ought to be*, their Study or their Aim. If it were, I apprehend the Scheme of their Households would appear at their Decease otherwise than it usually doth, and their Widows would produce another Sort of *Inventory* than they generally *exhibit*, and we might well be excused the Trouble of representing their Distress, or preferring Petitions for them.

BUT it is to the Honour of our deceased Brethren, when we can say, that they have not *laid up their Treasures in this World*, nor *trusted in uncertain Riches*; but have *set their Hearts* upon those *Premiums* that are proper to their Calling; *Premiums* to be expected in a better Place than this World is, and quite of another Nature from the Honours and Revenues that are sometimes annexed to the Profession.

I HAVE spoken plainly and freely to this Head, because I think that those Kind of Arguments that do most truly represent and account for, and thereby best justify the Poverty of our Widows and Orphans, do the most effectually recommend this Charity. Particular Exceptions there may be to every Article that I have urged; yet I persuade myself, that in the Main, and saving a few Exceptions, I have spoken the Truth of the Matter.

AND

AND I desire that nothing which has been now said may be misconstrued as an invidious Comparison between Men of our Cloth and those of other Faculties or Business. We of the *Clergy*, and of *the Sons of the Clergy*, do heartily congratulate with People of all other Professions and Callings, and with their Descendants too, that there is no standing Necessity, like this in our Case, for their drooping Families to be upheld by those of the Fraternity with a publick annual Collection. We wish that it may never fall to the Turn of any other Profession but this of *ours*, and of *our Fathers*, to stand distinguish'd by so sad a Circumstance as this Day's Meeting betokens and manifests to the World. And I hope it is without Offence, that we call upon, and invite all such as are Witnesses of this our *Labour of Love* to join with us in this *Ministration*, and to cast their *Offering* too into this *Corban*.

I CANNOT conclude without some *Address* to you, *my Brethren, Sons of the Clergy*.

WE are not only a Body incorporated by Law for this particular Purpose, but we are now, since *the Reformation*, in the Compass of two Centuries, (from the Time that the Clergy had the natural and sacred Rites of Marriage restor'd to them) become a significant Part of the Body of this Realm. And I have found it somewhere observed, that no one Race

er Generation of Men, or to speak more properly, no Set of Persons, immediately descended from Parents of the same Profession or liberal Calling, are so much scatter'd and dispers'd into all Ways of Life and Tracks of Business, as the Sons of Clergymen are.

I CANNOT indeed so well answer for the Truth of this Fact, as I can account, from probable and obvious Reasons, why it should be so in the Course of Things. For the Case is, very few of us are born to Fortunes, or to any fixed Settlement of Life. Most of us are obliged upon the Decease of our Fathers to quit our Abode, and shift for ourselves, whatever our Age or Education be. Neither is there that Encouragement or Prospect for us to be bred up in the Ways of our Fathers that there is in some other Occupations in Life. With us there is no building upon a Parent's Stock or Credit: There is no succeeding him, or carrying on his Business when he departs this World, and if such an Opportunity should happen to offer itself to us, yet the Ecclesiastical Constitutions forbid it, without a particular Dispensation for it. So that partly from a Deficiency in our Patrimony, which lays us under Obligations to turn our Brains to some profitable Scheme of Life or other; and partly from our Freedom to make our Option of an Employment, just as Inclination and Opportunities shall invite us: it follows, that we take into all the Roads of Business, and spread  
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ourselves into every Path of Breeding and of Life. Which hath given Occasion for an Application of *Tertullian's* Words, in his *Apologetick*, to our Case: ----- *Vestra omnia implevimus, urbes, municipia, castra, decurias, palatium, senatum, forum.* For the Descendants of the Clergy have not only like their Fathers step'd into the Pulpit, but have made a considerable Appearance at the Bar, and in the Camp, and in the Fleet; have been employ'd in all Offices Civil and Ecclesiastical; have applied themselves to all Branches of Trade, foreign and domestick; and exercised their Genius in every useful Occupation \*. And indeed, considering the Numbers of them that are yearly turn'd adrift, and plunge themselves into the vast Sea of worldly Business, 'tis a Blessing that so many of them do emerge fortunate.

Now,

\* They who are curious to examine into the Justice of this Remark will find a good deal of Matter for their Enquiry in the printed Lists of *the Governors of the Corporation* above, consisting altogether of *Sons of Clergymen*. The List more immediately referr'd to, (being the only one now at hand) is that of the Year 1719, consisting of above 750 Persons, then Governors, some of whom were named in the original Charter, and others *chosen* since. Among whom may be found not only Persons possessed of all manner of Church Dignities and Preferments, but filling, either then, or afterwards, all the eminent Posts in the Law from the Great Seals downwards; Men of all Denominations in the Art of Physick, as well as many Doctors in the Faculty; Officers in Land and Sea Service; Merchants and Tradesmen of various Kinds; besides many other Persons of Credit and Figure: Of all which Number of *Clergymens Sons* it appears, by the said List, that above 300 have been either Stewards of the Feast, or otherwise Benefactors to the Charity.

Now, my Application of all this is as follows, *viz.* That so many of us as are indebted to the good Providence of God for our Success in Life, seem to be under a more special Obligation to remember the poor Objects of this Charity, who are in some Sense allied to us, and have a double Claim to some Participation of our good Things, from their connected Relations to the Ministry, and to Poverty.

AND where can our Abundance, when it overflows, more suitably discharge itself, than to the comforting those forlorn Widows, whose Prospects of Happiness in this Life are over, having no new Turn to take in the World; and to the assisting and providing for those little Orphans, of both Sexes, who are yet too young to look out for themselves, and too tender to fight their Way among Mankind?

ALLOW me to remind you, *my Brethren*, of one Thing more upon this Occasion; and that is, that in this charitable Regard that we shew to the Relicts of those who bore the same Function with our Fathers, and were intitled to the same Respects, we do in a publick Manner recognize and revere our Parentage. We *honour our Fathers and our Mothers*. Something we owe to the Memory of their sacred Character, because something of the Credit of their Office rests upon us. For, as *Solomon* observes, *The Glory of Children are their Fathers*, Prov. xvii. 6. I do suppose we have as good Reason, at least, as  
any

any other Race of Men, to apply this to ourselves. Not that I mention it with Design to boast *an Honour*, but to inspire *a Virtue*. Permit me therefore to repeat the Wise Man's Saying: *Childrens Children are the Crown of old Men; but the Glory of Children are their Fathers.* Which Bishop *Patrick* paraphrases thus: "The Honour and Comfort of Parents  
 " lies in a numerous Progeny, which do not  
 " degenerate from their Ancestors Virtues.  
 " And that which makes Children illustrious,  
 " is their being descended from worthy Parents,  
 " whose Wisdom and Virtue reflect Honour  
 " on their Posterity."

LET us therefore *look unto the Rock from whence we are hewn*, Isa. li. 1, 2. *and to the Hole of the Pit whence we are digged.* Let us *look unto Abraham our Father, and unto Sarah that bare us.* Let us reflect both on the Characters and Examples of those from whose Loins we are sprung, that we may adhere to their Faith, and imitate their Conversation. And let us *not think to say within ourselves, we have Abraham to our Father*, Luke iii. 8. *unless we do the Works of Abraham*, John viii. 39. and walk in the Steps of his Faith and Obedience. Let us evidence our Lineage by the Purity of our Lives, and shew to what Tribe we belong *by the Spirit we are of.*

AND now I think nothing remains, but  
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that I should beg the Blessing of God upon  
 this good Work in which you are engaged:  
 And whether my Endeavours can any ways  
 contribute to your Success in it, or not; yet,  
*for my Brethren and Companions Sakes, I*  
*will wish you Prosperity: Tea, because of the*  
*House of the Lord our God, I will seek to*  
*do you Good, Psal. cxxii. 8, 9.*

**F I N I S**



